

## COVID-19 Vaccine for Youth with Special Needs or Disabilities: Information for Caregivers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone 12 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccination. Because children and youth with specialized health needs and disabilities may be at higher risk for more severe illness from COVID-19, families and caregivers are asked to strongly consider vaccinating children with any underlying health condition or disability.

- The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for youth ages 12 and older. It was shown to be safe and protective against COVID-19 among youth in this age range. Other vaccine products may be authorized in the near future as they are being studied in younger age groups.
- Youth with underlying medical conditions can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The only reason a person should not receive the vaccine is if they have had a life-threatening reaction (a reaction that requires an epi pen) to any of the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine.

What is in the vaccine?

The health care provider giving the vaccine will provide you with an emergency use authorization (EUA) fact sheet that has a detailed ingredients list. They can answer any questions about allergies. The Pfizer vaccine contains:

- mRNA
- Lipids: ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]- N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol)
- Salts: potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate
- Sugar
- The Pfizer vaccine does not contain eggs, preservatives, or latex.

Common side effects

Similar to other routine immunizations, some people have side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Side effects usually last one or two days and usually do not prevent the person from participating in daily activities. After getting the COVID-19 vaccine a person may have:

- A sore arm
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Fever/chills

Youth may have these side effects after vaccination that make them uncomfortable, but there are steps you can take to help them feel better, like giving them non-aspirin pain relievers (Tylenol or Ibuprofen) or making them comfortable with quiet activities.

#### Potential concerns

- History of allergies: Children with more severe allergies to things not listed above usually do not have a problem with the COVID-19 vaccine. They will be asked to wait about 30 minutes after the shot to monitor symptoms.
- Myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation): CDC has received reports of myocarditis and pericarditis in teens and young adults after the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. It is more common among males. This rare condition does not appear to be linked to any underlying health conditions. Most cases have been mild and are treatable. The known benefits of COVID-19 vaccination far outweigh the risks. Learn more at CDC: [Myocarditis and Pericarditis Following mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

#### Requesting accommodations

When you make an appointment or arrive at the vaccine site, make sure you let the staff know that the child in your care might need some extra help. For example, maybe they are unable to wear a mask or sit and wait after the shot. Perhaps bright lights and noisy rooms bother them. You can ask for accommodations such as:

- Walking around after the shot instead of sitting.
- Having someone vaccinate the youth in your car.
- Having their favorite companion accompany and help them during the appointment.
- Getting vaccinated in a quiet room away from the crowds.

#### Questions?

Health care providers will be available to answer your questions at the COVID-19 vaccination appointment. However, if you have any questions before then, ask a trusted health care provider.